



**Rhode Island Department of Human Services**

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April 17, 2020

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman  
House Committee on Oversight  
101 State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period March 16, 2020 – April 15, 2020. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/DHS Call Center summaries;
- CCAP off-cycle payments;
- LTSS interim payments and;
- Correspondence with federal partners (if any)

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHAWKINS", written in a cursive style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



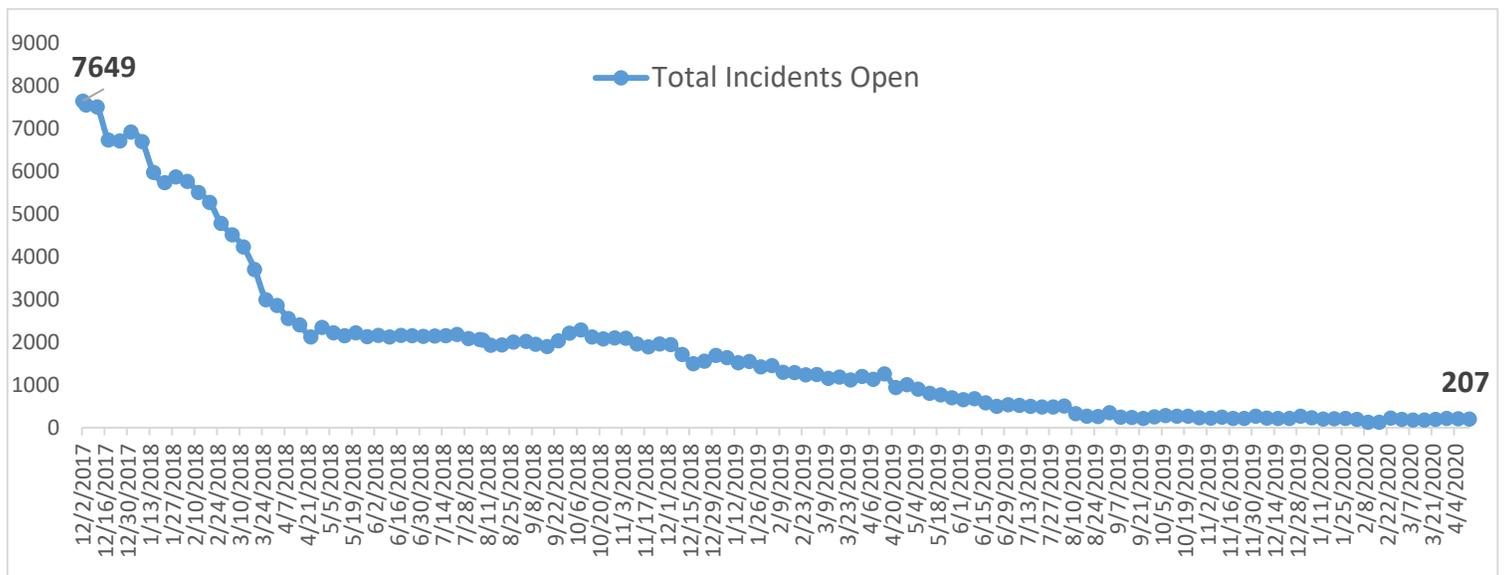
# RI Bridges: Monthly Update

## April 2020

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life, and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of work on RIBridges is an important part of the equation. With significant improvements to system stabilization under our belt, we are looking ahead to refocus our efforts on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

### SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS client, worker or provider) has decreased by 7,442 incidents. As of April 13, 2020, open incidents totaled 207 – a decline of 97% since December 2017.



## DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

### Hiring Update

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all hiring at the Department of Human Services was temporarily suspended. We have resumed hiring activities and hope to have new hire updates soon.

### Training Overview

#### Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
Quarterly Meetings	3/18/2020 3/19/2020 (2) 3/20/2020	6	0	286
How to Use Zoom (2 sessions)	3/26/2020 4/7/2020	3	0	8
How to Facilitate and Manage Virtual Meetings	4/9/2020 Session One	1.5	0	8
<b>Totals</b>		<b>10.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>302*</b>

\*current number of staff trained is a duplicate number

#### Current Staff Overview

During the last reporting period, DHS staff members participated in Quarterly Staff Meeting calls. Due to Covid-19, the Center for Staff Development and Learning (CSDL) members have been learning how to deliver trainings virtually.

#### Workshop Descriptions

**Quarterly Meetings** – The meetings were held virtually by using Skype and Conference Call. The topics covered in the meetings were as follows: Operational Changes with COVID-19; Policy Guidance regarding changes and review of requested waivers; SNAP (errors and ABAWD).

**Zoom Meeting Training Topics** – The CSDL team is building their capacity to deliver trainings virtually to DHS staff members. The trainings have introduced them to Zoom Meetings tool, a practice session on deliver training via Zoom; and how to manage and facilitate meetings.

## PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

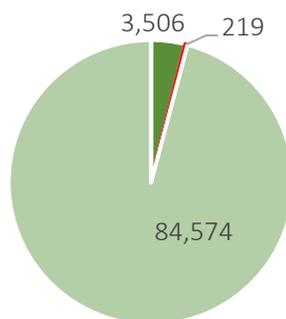
The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of April 8, 2020, the number of pending new applications across all programs is 5,448. The total of overdue pending applications awaiting State action is 1,415.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Exp	20	131	151	10	44	54	205
SNAP Non	921	422	1,343	73	21	94	1,437
CCAP	8	34	42	1	4	5	47
GPA Burial	0	2	2	1	1	2	4
SSP	0	33	33	0	2	2	35
GPA	26	30	56	58	38	96	152
RIW	134	76	210	14	45	59	269
Undetermined Medical	56	242	298	82	684	766	1,064
Medicaid-MAGI	63	43	106	79	70	149	255
MPP	3	31	34	2	5	7	41
Complex Medicaid	22	26	48	35	103	138	186
LTSS*			943			787	1,730
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>1,326</b>	<b>2,589</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>1,393</b>	<b>1,759</b>	<b>5,425</b>

\* EOHHS and DHS are improving the process for counting the LTSS backlog. At this time, we only have totals to share.

## SNAP TIMELINESS

DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. The timeliness for SNAP applications was 95.1 percent for expedited and 97.4 percent for non-expedited for March 2020. SNAP timeliness was 56 percent in November 2017. We have achieved more than 90 percent timeliness since April 2018.

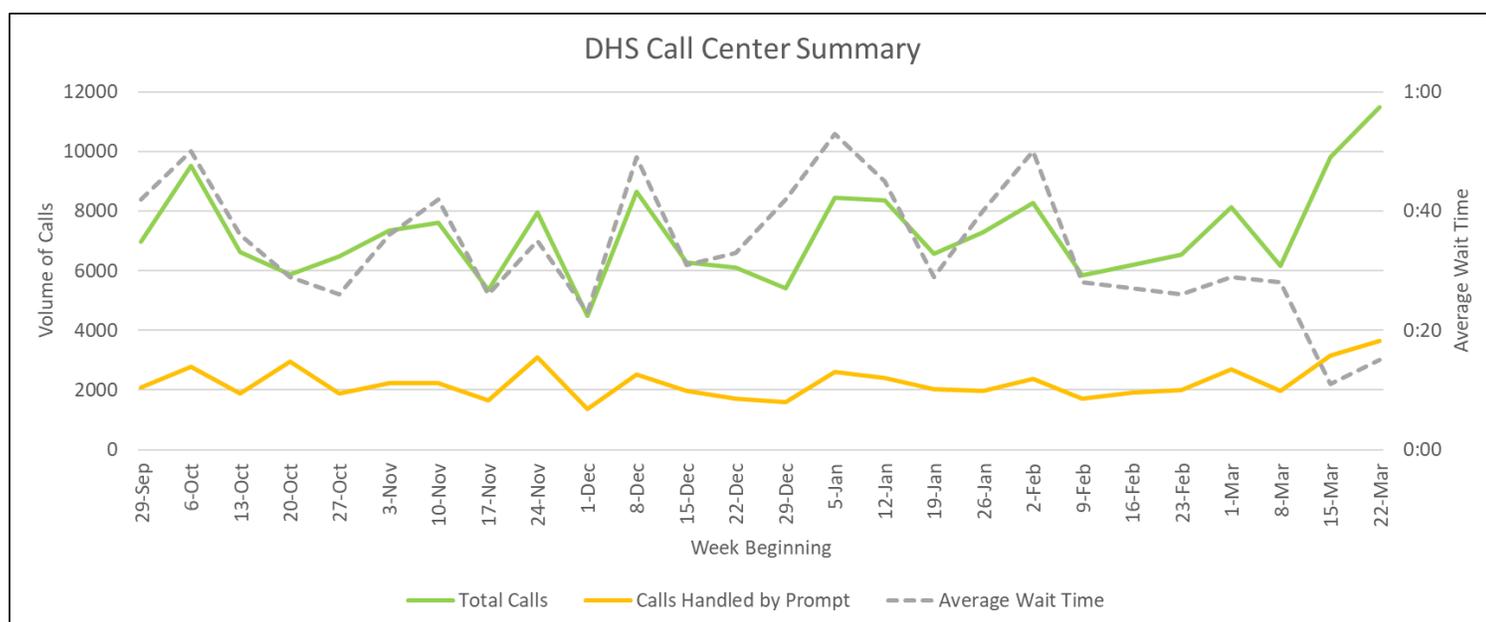


In March 2020, SNAP benefits were issued timely to more than 84,500 households. The number of applications not processed timely represents less than 1 percent of our SNAP population receiving benefits.

Untimely March Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

## CALL CENTER

Even with 11,475 calls during the second week of March 2020, the average wait time was less than 15 minutes. With the close of lobby facing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DHS Call Center capacity was increased by 60% to accommodate the interviews and questions for public benefits. The six-week average is 22 minutes, 26 seconds.



## CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between March 10 – April 9, 2020.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
20	03/10/2020	663	\$2,758,485
20A	03/12/2020	71	\$60,239
20B	03/19/2020	56	\$115,735
21	03/24/2020	644	\$2,725,338
21A	03/26/2020	12	\$17,159
21B	04/02/2020	40	\$57,823
22	04/07/2020	697	\$2,930,305
22A	04/09/2020	2	\$392
22B	04/16/2020	2	\$1438

\*Please note that in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, starting in Batch 22, DHS began paying providers based on their enrollment versus attendance.

\*In the second week of Batch 22, DHS is covering family copayment amounts.

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (20, 20A & 20B)	790	\$2,934,458
Off-cycle (20A & 20B)	127	\$175,973
Provider off-cycle/total	16.08%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	5.60%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (21, 21A & 21B)	696	\$2,800,320
Off-cycle (21A & 21B)	52	\$74,982
Providers off-cycle/total	7.47%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.68%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (22, 22A & 22B)	701	\$2,932,134
Off-cycle (22A)	4	\$1,830
Provider off-cycle/total	0.57%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	0.06%	-

## LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 787 overdue LTSS applications.

Through the contingency process, which ensures nursing and assisted living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, Rhode Island has paid out approximately \$11.75 million dollars in interim payments to facilities for the state fiscal year 2020 so far (please refer to attached Medicaid Expenditures Report). We are in the process of identifying specific payments from various facilities to submit a schedule illustrating the dollar amount by facility.

Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing as we continue to meet with long term care facilities across the state. In total, the state has paid approximately \$147.7 million we have collected about \$84.61 million in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately 57 percent of the total amount of contingency payments made.

## UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RI Bridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to communicate regularly to review progress with the RIBridges system. There isn't any UHIP-related correspondence during this reporting period of March 16, 2020 through April 15, 2020.